

Remarks

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 18, 21, 23-27, 30, 32-33, 35-36, and 38-39 are pending in the application, with claims 18, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, and 35 being the independent claims. Claims 1-17, 28-29, 34, and 37 were previously cancelled, and claims 19-20, 22, and 31 are sought to be cancelled, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. New dependent claims 38 and 39 are sought to be added. Claims 18, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, and 35 have been amended to include features allowable according to the Office Action. Claim 25 was amended to correct its dependency. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action states that Claims 18-20 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,414,749 B1 to Okamoto *et al.* ("Okamoto") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,240,200 B1 to Wendt *et al.* ("Wendt"). The Office Action also states that Claims 23 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okamoto in view of Wendt and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,485,981 B1 to Fernandez ("Fernandez"). The Office Action further states that Claims 25 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okamoto in view of Wendt and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,444,969 B2 to Johnson ("Johnson"). Finally, the Office Action states that

Claims 35 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okamoto in view of Fernandez.

Applicants traverse these rejections. However, in order to expedite prosecution of this application, claims 18, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, and 35 have been amended to include features deemed allowable according to the Office Action. Thus, independent claims 18, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, and 35, and all claims pending therefrom, are allowable. For this reason, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

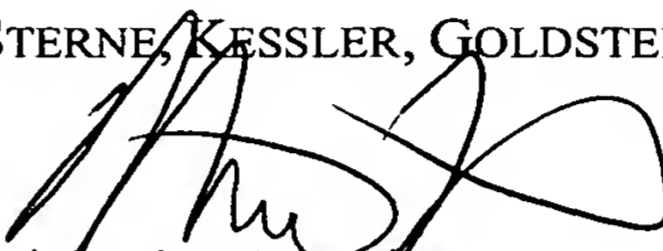
All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

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Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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